The History and Theory of Rhetoric

By tracing the traditional progression of rhetoric from the Greek Sophists to contemporary theorists, this textbook gives students a conceptual framework for evaluating and practicing persuasive writing and speaking in a wide range of settings and in both written and visual media.

The book's expansive historical purview illustrates how persuasive public discourse performs essential social functions and shapes our daily worlds, drawing on the ideas of some of history's greatest thinkers and theorists. The seventh edition includes greater attention to non-Western rhetorics, feminist rhetorics, the rhetoric of science, and European and American critical theory. Known for its clear writing style and contemporary examples throughout, *The History and Theory of Rhetoric* emphasizes the relevance of rhetoric to today's students.

This revised edition serves as a core textbook for rhetoric courses in both English and communication programs covering both the historical tradition of rhetoric and contemporary rhetoric studies.

This edition includes an instructor's manual and practice quizzes for students at www.routledge.com/cw/herrick.

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Praise for the Previous Edition

"*The History and Theory of Rhetoric* balances illuminating and concise reviews of canonical thinkers with critical discussions of the rhetorical tradition's blind spots, internal conflicts, and periodic course corrections. Its accessible prose and lively pace help students readily apprehend potentially intimidating material and recognize how the insights of the past reverberate through contemporary culture."

–**Brett Ingram,** *Boston College*

"Offering a foundation that encompasses over 2000 years, this text is digestible and meticulous rather than reductive. The author synthesizes history and theory such that readers can easily reference one part of the book while reading another and can utilize its term lists long after the first read. It is both a critical sourcebook and required reading for anyone interested in how rhetoric evolved."

– **Zosha Stuckey,** *Towson University*

"In my opinion, *The History and Theory of Rhetoric* is the best rhetorical history textbook on the market. Students at all levels appreciate its engaging, straightforward approach. Even so, serious philosophical and theoretical questions that arise from rhetoric's history receive the attention and care they deserve. The book strikes a perfect balance between accessibility and rigor."

–**Jackie Wheeler,** *Arizona State University*

"James Herrick invites students 'further up and further in' to the contours and depths of the art of rhetoric. He offers serious engagements with historical texts that ground the art and wades into the currents of contemporary theories that simultaneously interrogate and rely upon our rhetorical heritage."

–**Calvin L. Troup,** *Geneva College*

"*The History and Theory of Rhetoric* is not simply a book but a fascinating journey to explore the magnificent world of mind and speech interconnection throughout centuries, and its influence on various social developments of humanity. It is diverse and inclusive for all times and civilizations. The book is easy to understand and never simple. It provides valuable knowledge, useful skills, and competitive tools. The book is a must for all those who want to explore the world of rhetoric!"

–**Anahit Parzyan,** *Nanjing University*

7th Edition

The History and Theory of Rhetoric

An Introduction

James A. Herrick

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

NEW YORK AND LONDON

Visit the companion website: www.routledge.com/cw/herrick

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Preface

MY goal in the seventh edition of *The History and Theory of Rhetoric*, as in previous editions, is to provide students with an engaging and accessible survey of the history of rhetoric, primarily as it has developed in the Western world. This text also equips students with a conceptual framework for evaluating and practicing persuasive writing and speaking in a wide range of settings and in various written and visual media.

Each chapter introduces readers to influential theories of rhetoric advanced by some of history's greatest thinkers. Through encountering the rhetorical tradition, students are better prepared to understand and participate in the wide array of persuasive symbolic practices that mark our social world, and develop, recognize, and evaluate rhetorical qualities in a wide range of texts, including the growing world of digital rhetoric.

NEW TO THIS EDITION

I have sought to make the writing in this edition clear and economical, and the content readily comprehensible. I have added material to several of the historical chapters in an effort to bring into clearer focus the cultural contexts of the rhetorical theories discussed. Additional biographical details have been added to the description of several particularly important theorists and the coverage of comparative and feminist rhetorics has been expanded in this edition. I have also further developed the discussion of materialist approaches to rhetoric, and the complex networks of influence presented in Actor-Network Theory. These recent theoretical perspectives expand the traditional notion of rhetorical agency, even as they challenge the notion of exclusively human agents.

OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 presents several defining characteristics of rhetoric as a type of discourse, as well as discussing the social functions of the art of rhetoric. I have also sought to remain mindful of the tensions and ambiguities that always attend efforts to define rhetoric. The question of definition is rendered more nuanced with the recognition of

visual rhetoric as a major component of our corporate symbolic activity. With this foundation in place, the balance of the text is organized historically.

Chapter 2 considers the Sophists as early teachers, practitioners, and theorists of rhetoric. The chapter examines the ways in which these experimental and controversial rhetoricians shaped not just the practice of rhetoric, but also our understanding of the symbolic nature of human existence. While I do address the controversy the Greek Sophists generated, their role as theorists who achieved considerable insight into rhetoric's nature and power is also emphasized. I have tried to demonstrate that the Sophists do not all belong to a single school of thought regarding rhetoric but vary in their approaches to the art.

Chapter 2 also addresses the issue of women's voices in ancient Greek rhetoric. The chapter introduces the poet Sappho, considers women as empowered voices in the Spartan marketplace, and discusses the rhetorical innovator Aspasia.

Chapter 3 takes up Plato's famous, and controversial, criticism of the Sophists in the dialogue *Gorgias*. The centrality of Plato's insistence on an account—a *logos*—from the Sophists concerning the nature of their art is recognized. The chapter also addresses the great philosopher's musings about a true art of rhetoric in *Phaedrus*.

Chapter 4 explores Aristotle's highly influential rhetorical theory advanced in his *Rhetoric*. This chapter attends to Aristotle's assessment of rhetoric as a *techne* or true art. The concepts of the enthymeme, artistic proofs, and *topoi* of argument are all reviewed.

Chapter 5 considers Roman adaptations of Greek rhetoric to a new cultural context. The striking differences between the Roman and Greek conceptions of the citizen are emphasized. Recent scholarship provides a clearer view of rhetorical theory and practice in Rome. Key components in Cicero's theory, including his famous canons of rhetoric and his concern for the preparation of the orator-leader, remain focal points. Roman attention to judicial oratory and argument is also stressed. The contributions of Quintilian and Longinus to rhetorical thought are explored, as is the close relationship between rhetoric and citizenship in ancient Rome.

Chapter 6 explores the theories and uses of rhetoric that characterized the medieval period, first in North Africa and later in Europe. St. Augustine's adaptation of the Roman rhetoric he knew so well to the needs of the Christian church is discussed. Other early medieval rhetoricians such as Martianus Capella and Boethius are also covered. In addition, the chapter examines the rhetorical arts that developed in the later Middle Ages, including preaching, letter writing, and poetry. A new section has been added on the letter-writing activity of Alcuin, an early practitioner of the art. Other important figures representing the medieval rhetorical arts are also introduced. The emergence of a female reading public is addressed, as is the corresponding rise of female writers such as Marie de France.

Renaissance rhetorical theory and the Italian Humanists remain the focus of Chapter 7. The Humanists' intense interest in classical texts and languages, the arrival in fifteenth-century Italy of large numbers of Greek texts from Byzantium, and the period's fascination with Cicero, led to the extraordinary impact of rhetoric on European education and civic life.

The entry of women into rhetorical roles in a substantial fashion during the Renaissance is also outlined, as are women's increased access to education and fora of communication. The tension between contemplative and active lives is discussed, as is rhetoric's role in the rise of commercial cities, and its encouragement of

Renaissance preoccupation with magic. The late-Renaissance emergence of the conversational model of rhetoric is noted, as is rhetoric's struggle with dialectic and a scientific style of writing.

Chapter 8 focuses on the period from 1650 through 1850. The chapter discusses the intriguing Italian theorist Giambattista Vico, who saw myth as foundational to civilization and assigned rhetoric a central role in the evolution of human thought. The chapter also considers writers of the Scottish Enlightenment, including George Campbell, Lord Kames, and Hugh Blair. English rhetorical theorists, including the elocutionist Thomas Sheridan and traditionalist Richard Whately, are also introduced. The chapter opens and closes with women writers—Margaret Cavendish and Maria Edgeworth—whose rhetorical efforts stood largely outside, and as a challenge to, the mainstream of the Enlightenment rhetorical tradition.

Interest in rhetoric during the second half of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries is explored in the book's concluding three chapters. Chapter 9 focuses on rhetorical theories developing around perennial rhetorical constituents of argument, audience, and public discourse. Chaim Perelman's and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca's audience- and argument-based "new rhetoric" is discussed. Jürgen Habermas' theory of how to create a more rational society is also taken up, with attention to his prescriptions for a rational public arena. The chapter also explores the various ways in which science can be understood as rhetorical.

Chapter 10 explores rhetoric as preparation for living effectively in the always evolving world of symbols. A discussion of Kenneth Burke explores his leading ideas and his central theory of dramatism. The chapter examines Burke's famed pentad and associated discussion of the worldviews. Lloyd Bitzer's situational theory is also introduced here. Mikhail Bakhtin's and Wayne Booth's influential theories of the rhetoric of narration receive careful treatment as well, as do the narrative theories of Walter Fisher and Ernest Bormann.

An expanded section in Chapter 10 introduces the rhetoric of material objects, concepts such as circulation and generalized symmetry, and Actor-Network Theory (ANT). The crucial issue of rhetorical agency is addressed. Visual rhetoric or the rhetoric of display is introduced as adding an important and often missing dimension to rhetorical analysis. Finally, this chapter considers how digital media affect the rhetorical experience, and may call for new and broader conceptions of rhetoric.

Chapter 11 considers several theories of symbol use and public discourse shaped by Continental criticism and postmodern thought. The rise of postmodernism in Europe is addressed, setting several major figures in their intellectual context. Michel Foucault's insights into the close connections among discourse, power, and knowledge are discussed, as is Jacques Derrida's critique of the instability of language itself. Queer Theory, closely related to Foucault's theoretical insights, is introduced.

An expanded section considers various strains of feminist thinking about rhetoric, moving the discussion of feminism beyond efforts to retrieve a distinctly feminine rhetorical voice. This chapter also features a discussion of several non-Western conceptions of rhetoric, with attention to how the competitive nature of ancient Greek culture dramatically affected Western rhetoric. The contributions of Muslim scholars to rhetorical studies during the Middle Ages are explored, focusing on the work of Averroes.

The seventh edition of *The History and Theory of Rhetoric* seeks to integrate material within and among chapters, and to describe the intellectual and historical

contexts for each theorist and school of thought. Each chapter includes a list of key terms as well as questions for review and for discussion. A complete glossary of terms should also be useful for review of important concepts, and the bibliography can be of assistance to students who wish to do additional reading on a particular topic or theorist. A detailed instructor's manual can be found on the companion website, available at www.routledge.com/cw/herrick.

The centrality of symbolic activity to our public and private lives propels our interest in symbols and their strategic use; the record of this interest constitutes the history of rhetoric. Our reliance on rhetorical interaction for the development and maintenance of cooperative social arrangements makes the history and theory of rhetoric a crucial study for all informed people. Given the pluralistic nature of contemporary society and the resulting necessity of discovering equitable compromises through discourse, the study of rhetoric is more relevant today than it ever has been.

The rational flexibility demanded by our increasing reliance on digital forms of communication provides further justification for a concentrated focus on insights from the history of rhetoric. I hope that this new edition of *The History and Theory of Rhetoric* captures the vitality and adaptability of rhetoric as the art of the purposeful and productive management of all types of symbols.

James A. Herrick

An Overview of Rhetoric

My first problem lies of course in the very word "rhetoric."
—Wayne Booth, *The Vocation of a Teacher*

By rhetorical, I refer to something's ability to induce change in thought, feeling, and action; organize and maintain collective formation; exert power, etc.; as it enters into relation with other things (human or nonhuman).
—Laurie Gries

THIS chapter explores the history, theories, and practices of rhetoric. But, as literary critic Wayne Booth (1921–2005) suggested in the quotation above, the term *rhetoric* poses some problems at the outset because of the various meanings it has acquired. For some people, rhetoric is synonymous with empty talk or even deception. We hear clichés like, "That's mere rhetoric" or "That's just empty rhetoric," which are used to undermine or dismiss a comment or opinion.

Meanwhile, rhetoric has once again emerged as an important topic of study, and its significance to public discussion of political, social, religious, and scientific issues is now widely recognized. Scholars and teachers express great interest in the subject; colleges and universities offer courses in rhetoric; and dozens of books are published every year with rhetoric in their titles. Clearly, rhetoric arouses mixed feelings—it is a term of derision and yet a widely studied discipline, employed as an insult and still recommended to students as a practical subject of study. What is going on here? Why all the confusion and ambiguity surrounding the term *rhetoric*?

Negative attitudes toward rhetoric are not of recent origin. In fact, one of the earliest and most influential critical discussions of rhetoric occurs in Plato's dialogue *Gorgias*, a work written in the opening decades of the fourth century BCE when rhetoric was popular—though also highly controversial—in the Greek city-state of Athens. The great philosopher, as his dialogue makes clear, takes a dim view of rhetoric, at least as practiced by some teachers of the day called Sophists. The character Socrates, apparently representing Plato's own perspective, argues that the type of rhetoric being taught in Athens was simply a means by which "naturally clever" people "flatter" their unsuspecting listeners into agreeing with them and doing their bidding. Plato condemns rhetoric as

"foul" and "ugly," a judgment that has haunted the discipline ever since.[1] We will discuss his specific criticisms of rhetoric in Chapter 3, note that Plato was involved in an ongoing debate about the topic, and consider that he apparently changed his perspective on rhetoric later in his life.

Ever since Plato's *Gorgias* first appeared, rhetoric has struggled to redeem its tarnished public image. Rhetoric bashing continues in an almost unbroken tradition from ancient times to the present. In 1690 another respected philosopher, John Locke (1632–1704), advanced a view of rhetoric not unlike, and likely influenced by, Plato's. The following quotation represents Locke's writing in his highly influential book, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*:

> If we speak of things as they are, we must allow that all the art of rhetoric, besides order and clearness; all the artificial and figurative application of words eloquence hath invented, are for nothing else but to insinuate wrong ideas, move the passions, and thereby mislead the judgment; and so indeed are perfect cheats … .[2]

Locke does acknowledge that one aspect of rhetoric, what he calls "order and clearness," is useful. However, he rejects the study of "artificial and figurative" language as deceptive. As we will see in Chapter 7, Locke was immersed in a debate about figurative language when he expressed this opinion—so he was hardly a neutral witness. He was also aware that the greatest English language master of rhetoric—William Shakespeare (1564–1616)—lived just a few decades earlier.

The nineteenth-century German philosopher and classicist Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900)—who made a serious study of rhetoric—wrote, "We call an author, a book, or a style 'rhetorical' when we observe a conscious application of artistic means of speaking; it always implies a gentle reproof." A "gentle reproof" certainly reflects a more measured assessment than Locke's "perfect cheats."

But, Nietzsche was aware of something else, something deeper and more fundamental, lurking in the realm of the rhetorical:

> [I]t is not difficult to prove that what is called "rhetorical," as a means of conscious art, had been active as a means of unconscious art in language and its development, indeed, that the *rhetorical is a further development*, guided by the clear light of the understanding, of *the artistic means which are already found in language*.

What does Nietzsche mean by the curious phrase, "*the artistic means already found in language*"? Is he, perhaps, suggesting that language itself possesses an irreducible artistic or aesthetic quality that rhetoric merely draws out? He continues:

> There is obviously no unrhetorical "naturalness" of language to which one could appeal; language itself is the result of purely rhetorical arts. The power to discover and to make operative that which works and impresses, with respect to each thing, a power which Aristotle calls rhetoric, is, at the same time, the essence of language … .[3]

If Nietzsche is correct that nothing in the realm of language is purely "natural" and unmarked by "rhetorical arts," that rhetoric is "the essence of language," then rhetoric

is certainly a matter that deserves our attention. Few disciplines can make such a comprehensive claim regarding their consequence for both public and private life.

RE-EVALUATING RHETORIC

Opinion about rhetoric has always been dramatically divided. In recent decades a number of prominent writers have re-evaluated rhetoric, sometimes arriving at surprising—and potentially paradigm-shifting—conclusions.

Wayne Booth, whom we have already encountered, was one of the twentieth century's leading literary critics. Booth affirmed that rhetoric held "entire dominion over all verbal pursuits. Logic, dialectic, grammar, philosophy, history, poetry, all are rhetoric."[4] Entire dominion? *All* verbal pursuits are rhetoric? What could Booth have had in mind in making such sweeping assertions regarding rhetoric?

Nevertheless, Booth is not alone in maintaining such a stunning view of rhetoric. Another important twentieth-century literary scholar, Richard McKeon (1900–1985), expressed virtually the same opinion. For McKeon, rhetoric was best understood as "a universal and architectonic art."[5] Rhetoric is universal, that is, present everywhere we turn. But what about *architectonic*? McKeon meant that rhetoric organizes and gives structure to *all* the other arts and disciplines, that it is a kind of master discipline that orders and lends form to other undertakings. This is because rhetoric is, among other things, the study of how we organize and employ language effectively. Thus, it becomes the study of how we organize our thinking on a wide range of subjects.

In apparent agreement with Booth and McKeon, Richard Lanham (b. 1936) of the University of California has called for a return to rhetorical studies as a way of preparing us to understand the impact of digitization on how we read and write. Rather than developing a completely new theory of literacy for the digital age, Lanham argues that "we need to go back to the original Western thinking about reading and writing—the rhetorical *paideia* [educational program] that provided the backbone of Western education for two thousand years."[6] For Lanham, the study that originally taught the Western world its approach to education and communication—rhetoric—can still teach us new things, like how to adapt to the emerging world of digital communication.

Professor Andrea Lunsford (b. 1942), Director of Stanford University's Program in Writing and Rhetoric, is among a growing number of scholars who, like Lanham, have returned to rhetoric as providing guidance in understanding how the digital revolution is shaping our reading and writing habits. After analyzing thousands of students writing samples—including blogs, tweets, and classroom assignments—Lunsford and her colleagues concluded that students today expect their writing to change the world they live in. For today's students "good writing changes something. It doesn't just sit on the page. It gets up, walks off the page and changes something."[7]

Rhetoric scholar Laurie Gries brings a rather different—and highly consequential—perspective to rhetoric, writing: "By *rhetorical*, I refer to something's ability to induce change in thought, feeling, and action; organize and maintain collective formation; exert power, etc.; as it enters into relation with other things (human or nonhuman)."[8] Notice that Gries refers to "some*thing's*" rhetorical capacity, broadening rhetorical agency beyond human beings and thus beyond language.

Booth, McKeon, Lanham, Lunsford, and Gries find much to commend in the study that Plato condemned as "foul and ugly," and ask us to reconsider those elements of eloquence that Locke referred to as "perfect cheats." It appears that we are at a point in our cultural history where rhetoric is re-establishing itself as an important study with insights to offer about a surprisingly broad spectrum of human—and even non-human—communication activities.

At the same time, we must acknowledge that the practice of rhetoric maintains its Jekyll and Hyde quality, shifting without notice from helpful and constructive to deceptive and manipulative. Why does this study of the effective uses of language and other symbols prove so difficult to evaluate, eliciting as it does such sharply opposed judgments? A complete answer to this question requires some knowledge of rhetoric's long history, which is the subject of this book. But almost certainly, rhetoric's mixed reviews have a lot to do with its association with persuasion, that most suspect but essential human activity. A brief digression to explore this connection between rhetoric and persuasion will be worth our while.

RHETORIC AND PERSUASION

Though there is more to the study of rhetoric than persuasion alone, rhetoric traditionally has been closely concerned with linguistic techniques for gaining compliance. This long-standing association with persuasion has been at the heart of the conflict over whether rhetoric is a neutral tool for bringing about agreements, or a dubious activity that ends in manipulation.

Rhetoric's intimate connection with persuasion has prompted both intense suspicion and broad interest. After all, we all are leery of persuasion. Who has not had a bad experience as the object of someone else's persuasive efforts? Think of the last time you knew you were being persuaded by a high-pressure sales technique, a religious advocate, a politician, a professor, or simply by a friend or family member. Something in you may have resisted the persuasive effort, and you may even have felt some self-protective irritation. But you may also have felt you were being drawn in by the appeal, that you were, in fact, being persuaded. If the person doing the persuading was employing rhetorical techniques, you might conclude that you had some reason to distrust both rhetoric and the people who practice it. So, most of us have developed a healthy suspicion of persuasion, and perhaps a corresponding mistrust of rhetoric.

At the same time, a moment's thought suggests that all of us seek to persuade others on a regular basis. Many professions, in fact, require a certain understating of and capacity to persuade. Persuasion can even be understood as an important part of economics and the world of work. Economist Deirdre McCloskey (b. 1942) has argued that "persuasion has become astonishingly important" to the economy.[9] She estimated, for example, that one quarter of the work force depended on skill with words to do their work. What has she concluded? "I gradually realized that the *economy* … is rhetorical. An economy is continuously negotiated *with words*." McCloskey adds, "an economy is a conversation." She explains: "The point is that the economy is very largely about persuasion, because it is negotiated and innovative and above all because it is about a future to which we are vulnerable."[10]

But, what about in our private lives? It seems we remain perpetual persuaders in our personal relationships. Who does not make arguments, advance opinions, and

seek compliance from friends? Moreover, we typically engage in these persuasive activities without thinking we are doing anything wrong. In fact, it is difficult *not* to persuade; we participate in the practice on an almost daily basis in our interactions with friends, colleagues at work, or members of our family. We may attempt to influence friends or family members to adopt our political views; we will happily argue the merits of a movie we like; we *are* that salesperson, religious advocate, or politician. It is difficult to imagine a relationship in which persuasion has no role, or an organization that does not depend, to some degree, on efforts to change other people's thoughts and thus to influence their actions.

Let us consider some additional examples of how universal persuasion can be. We usually think of sports as a domain of physical competition, and not of verbal battles. Yet, even sports involve disagreements about such things as the interpretation of rules, a referee's call, or which play to execute. And, these disagreements often are settled by arguments and appeals of various kinds, that is, by persuasion. British psychologist Michael Billig (b. 1947) notes that many of the rules governing a sport result from rhetorical interactions about such issues as how much violence to allow on the field of play. He writes, "The rules of rugby and soccer were formulated in order to transform informal agreements, which had permitted all manner of aggressive play, into defined codes that restricted violence." Rhetoric, especially its argumentative aspect, was crucial to the creation of these rules of play. "Above all, the rules were formulated against a background of argument."[11] Even the rules by which athletes compete, it appears, came into being through rhetoric.

Is the same true in a technical field like medicine? If medicine is a science, should not argument and persuasion be non-existent? In fact, medical decisions are often made after a doctor advances a convincing case for or against a particular procedure in a rhetorical exchange with other doctors. And, the decision-making exchange often is not limited to technical issues, such as the interpretation of medical data like the results of a blood test. To be sure, the arguments advanced will involve medical principles, but they are arguments nonetheless, they are intended to be persuasive and they range beyond strict medical guidelines.

In medical dialogue we are likely to hear ethical concerns raised, the wishes of a family considered, and even questions of cost evaluated. Moreover, the patient often has to be persuaded to take a particular medicine, follow a specified diet, or allow doctors to perform a surgical procedure. As physicians argue, rival medical theories may be in conflict and rival egos may clash. Who should perform a needed corneal transplant on a famous politician? We might think that such an important decision would be based on medical criteria alone. Yet, even a question like this may be resolved on the basis of arguments between two well-known physicians at competing hospitals. Clearly, the science of medicine has its rhetorical side.

Bringing the focus down to a more personal level, does romance involve persuasion? When I seek the attention of someone in whom I am romantically interested, I start to develop a case—though perhaps not an explicit and public one—about my own good qualities. When in the vicinity of the individual concerned, I may attempt to appear humorous, intelligent, and considerate. My words and actions take on a rhetorical quality as I build the case for my own attractiveness. I might be convincing, or may fail to convince, but in either event I have made choices about how to develop my appeal, so to speak. Once begun, romantic relationships go forward (or backward)

on the basis of persuasive interactions on topics ranging from how serious the relationship should be to whether to attend a particular concert.

Other activities also bring us into the realm of rhetoric. Business transactions, from marketing strategies to contract negotiations, involve persuasive efforts. As McCloskey has pointed out, many people make their living by means of their abilities as persuasive speakers or writers. Nor is education immune from rhetorical influence. You often are aware that a professor is advocating a point of view in a lecture that ostensibly presents simple "information," or that classmates argue with one another hoping to persuade others to their point of view. As a matter of fact, you have been reading an extended persuasive case for the importance of studying rhetoric. Textbooks, it should come as little surprise, often have a persuasive agenda embedded within them.

Efforts at persuasion mark many, perhaps all, of our interpersonal activities. In fact, we even persuade *ourselves*. The internal rhetoric of "arguing with yourself" accompanies most of life's decisions, big or small. Though our experiences may leave us leery of persuasion, it is also an important component of our occupational, social, and private lives.[12]

Now, back to rhetoric. If rhetoric is, in part, the systematic study of persuasion, recognizing how crucial persuasion is to daily life may suggest that this art deserves our attention. To acknowledge what we might call "the pervasiveness of persuasiveness" is not to condemn persuasion or rhetoric. Rather, it is to begin to appreciate the centrality of this activity to much of life, and to recognize that human beings are rhetorical beings. At this point, it will be important to develop a more precise definition of rhetoric.

DEFINING RHETORIC

Scholars have advanced a variety of insightful definitions of our topic. Rhetoric scholar James J. Murphy has suggested "advice to others about future language use" as one way of defining rhetoric.[13] Murphy's definition implies prior study of the topic rhetoric that has resulted in a set of tested theories and reliable techniques. Classicist George Kennedy defines rhetoric more broadly as "the energy inherent in emotion and thought, transmitted through a system of signs, including language, to others to influence their decisions or actions."[14] This definition suggests that rhetoric is simply part of who we are as human beings: Every time we express emotions and thoughts to others with the goal of influence, we express a kind of energy that Kennedy calls rhetoric.

Rhetoric and Symbol Systems

Note that for Kennedy rhetoric involves "signs, including language." I would like to focus attention on this important point for a moment, and suggest that rhetoric develops in the realm of symbols of one type or another. So, what are symbols? An individual word such as *boat* is an example of a symbol. It is a general term referring to any mark, sign, sound, or gesture that communicates meaning based on social agreement. Individual symbols usually are part of a larger symbolic system, such as a language.

Language is the symbol system on which most of us rely for communicating with others on a daily basis. However, many arts and other activities also provide symbolic

resources for communicating. In fact, social life depends on our ability to use a wide range of symbol systems to communicate meanings to one another, and a rhetorical dimension can be detected in many of these.

Music

Musical notation and performance constitute a symbol system, one that uses notes, key, melody, harmony, sound, and rhythm to communicate meanings. Movie soundtracks provide convenient examples of how the symbol system of music can communicate meaning. For instance, musical techniques were used to enhance audience tension in John Williams's famous score from the movie *Jaws*, as well as Bernard Herrmann's screeching violins in the frightening shower scene in Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*. The stirring music of Tchaikovsky's famous *1812 Overture* set the right triumphal note for the opening and closing scenes of the 2006 film *V for Vendetta*. More recently, British composer Steven Price intentionally broke with movie soundtrack conventions—for instance, he avoided the use of percussion—in creating his Academy-Award-winning soundtrack for the movie *Gravity* (2013). Price's score perfectly conveys the risks and emptiness of space. Perhaps the rhetoric of music is so well established that we readily understand what it is "saying" to us.

Dance and Acting

Many of the movements in dance are also symbolic because they express meaning on the basis of agreements among dancers, choreographers, and audience members. For instance, three dancers in a row performing the same robotic movement may symbolize the tedium and regimentation of modern life. Similarly, gestures, postures, and facial expressions allow mime artists and actors to communicate with audiences symbolically but without employing the symbols of spoken language. There is no actual connection between pondering a question and scratching your head, and yet a theatrical scratch of the scalp means "I don't know" or "I'm thinking about it" by a kind of unstated social agreement.

Actors and impressionists such as Jim Carrey and Kristen Wiig have mastered a range of physical symbols—gestures, postures, and facial expressions—that allow them to communicate instantly with audiences, often without speaking a word.

Painting

In painting, form, line, color, and arrangement can be symbolic. A stark line of dark clouds may symbolize impending disaster, even though clouds do not typically accompany actual disasters. But, because storms and calamity are sometimes associated, and because we often fear storms, we understand the artist's intent. Norwegian painter Edvard Munch used such a technique in his 1893 painting *Shrik* (*Scream*), where a brilliant orange–red sky symbolizes terror. But, then, what does Mona Lisa's slight grin "mean." No doubt Leonardo da Vinci had something in mind in crafting that half smile, but scholars and the public alike have never come to an agreement as to his intentions.

Architecture

The lines, shapes, and materials used in architecture can also be employed symbolically to communicate meaning. The protests by veterans' groups that greeted the unveiling of the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C. were responses to what some observers took

to be the *meaning* of the monument, a meaning with which they did not agree.[15] Much of the monument is below ground, perhaps suggesting invisibility or even death. Is it significant that the memorial cannot be seen from Capitol Hill? The principal material used in the monument is black granite rather than the more traditional and triumphal white marble. The polished surface is covered with the names of the fifty thousand Americans who died in the war rather than with carved scenes of battle and victory. What does the Vietnam Memorial mean? One would be hard-pressed to find its meaning to be, "A united America triumphs again in a foreign war." Nevertheless, each symbolic component prompts one to ask deep and troubling questions about a long and tragic war.

Sports

Perhaps the symbols employed in music, dance, acting, painting, or architecture can be readily understood as rhetorical, as they carry a meaning that can be intentionally selected and refined. However, can an athletic event carry rhetorical significance? Long-distance swimmer Diana Nyad requested permission from the Cuban government to swim the 103-mile distance between Cuba and Florida. The Cuban government reluctantly granted her permission for the swim. "The Cubans don't like the implication of somebody walking out on one of their beaches and swimming away," Nyad said in a 2010 *Los Angeles Times* report.[16] The symbolism of swimming *away* from Cuba apparently was felt to reflect negatively on the Cuban political system. Nyad finally completed the swim on her fifth attempt in 2013, after 53 hours in the water. A long and, to some, rhetorical swim.

Unexpected Locations

Rhetorical elements can reveal themselves in places we might easily overlook. For example, the typeface in which this book is printed has a rhetorical dimension. Though readers are not directed to notice the statement being made by typeface, each individual font was designed to convey a particular quality, character, or tone. Most textbooks are set in a typeface that appears to readers as serious, intentional, and, of course, legible. The typeface for a wedding invitation, however, might be selected to convey elegance or romance. Certainly if the type in this book were set in a font ordinarily reserved for a wedding invitation, a reader would immediately notice this unusual choice. So, we might say that typeface is selected, like the music in a hotel elevator, in order to not be noticed.[17]

Effective Symbolic Expression

While persuasion has long been an important goal of rhetoric, we should perhaps expand the definition of rhetoric to include other goals such as achieving clarity, awakening our sense of beauty, or bringing about mutual understanding. Thus, we can define the art of rhetoric as follows: The systematic study and intentional practice of effective symbolic expression. *Effective* here will mean achieving the purpose of the symbol-user, whether that purpose is persuasion, clarity, beauty, or mutual understanding.

The art of rhetoric can render symbol use more persuasive, beautiful, memorable, forceful, thoughtful, clear, and thus generally more compelling. In all of these ways, rhetoric is the art of employing symbols effectively. Rhetorical theory is the systematic presentation of rhetoric's principles, its various social functions, and how the art

achieves its goals. Messages crafted according to the principles of rhetoric will be called rhetorical discourse, or simply rhetoric. An individual practicing the art of rhetoric will occasionally be referred to as a rhetor.

As we have noted, for most of its history, the art of rhetoric has focused on persuasion by employing the symbol system of language. This traditional approach to rhetoric is still important, but recently both rhetoric's goals and the symbolic resources available to those practicing the art have expanded dramatically. Even the centrality of human agents has been challenged by some recent rhetorical movements such as posthumanism, Actor-Network Theory, and new materialism. Such developments have led some scholars to write of different kinds of rhetoric, even different rhetorics. Steven Mailloux notes that "there are oral, visual, written, digital, gestural, and other kinds; and under written rhetoric, there are various genres such as autobiographies, novels, letters, editorials, and so forth … ."[18]

Does this mean that all communication, regardless of goal or symbol system employed, is rhetoric? Some scholars make communication and rhetoric synonymous, but this seems to ignore genuine and historically important distinctions among types of communication ranging from information and reports through casual conversations to outright propaganda. I will be taking the position that rhetorical discourse is a particular type of communication possessing several identifying characteristics. What, then, are the features of rhetorical discourse that set it apart from other types of communication? The following section describes six distinguishing qualities of rhetorical *discourse* as we encounter it in writing, speaking, the arts, and other media of expression.

RHETORICAL DISCOURSE

This section considers six distinguishing characteristics of rhetorical discourse; the marks the art of rhetoric leaves on messages. Rhetorical discourse characteristically is (1) planned, (2) adapted to an audience, (3) shaped by human motives, (4) responsive to a situation, (5) persuasion-seeking, and (6) concerned with contingent issues. Not all writing or speaking that might meaningfully be termed rhetoric satisfies all of these criteria, but the criteria will serve as a starting point for identifying, understanding, and responding to rhetorical discourse. We begin by considering rhetoric's most fundamental quality.

Rhetoric Is Planned

Regardless of the goal at which it aims, rhetorical discourse involves forethought or planning. Thinking of rhetoric as planned symbol use directs our attention to the choices people make about how they will address their audiences. Issues that arise in planning a message include the following:

—Which arguments will I advance?
—Which evidence best supports my point?
—How will I order and arrange my arguments and evidence?
—What resources of language and other symbol systems are available to me, given my topic and audience?

The planned nature of rhetoric has long been recognized as one of its defining features. Some early rhetorical theorists developed elaborate systems to assist would-be orators in planning their speeches. The Roman writer Cicero, for instance, used the term *inventio* (invention) to describe the process of discovering the arguments and evidence for a persuasive case. He then provided specific methods for inventing arguments quickly and effectively. Cicero also discussed the effective ordering of arguments and appeals under the heading *dispositio* (arrangement), while he used the term *elocutio* to designate the process of finding the right linguistic style for one's message, whether elegant or conversational.

Such concerns, already extensively studied in the ancient world, reflect the planned quality that characterizes rhetorical discourse. In subsequent chapters, we will look more closely at a number of rhetorical systems designed to assist the planning of messages.

Rhetoric Is Adapted to an Audience

Concern for forethought or planning suggests a second characteristic of rhetorical discourse. Rhetoric is planned with some audience in mind. *Audience* should not be understood strictly in the traditional sense of a large group of people seated in rows of chairs in a large hall. Some audiences are of this type, most are not.

When you speak to a small group of employees at work, they are your audience and you may adapt your discourse to them. The author of a letter while writing to the editor of a local newspaper also keeps the audience in mind, though the audience is not made up of people whom the author can see or knows personally in most cases. Similarly, a novelist writes with particular groups of readers in mind who constitute his or her audience. A politician may address a vast and diverse national audience by means of mass media.

Typically, a rhetor must make an educated guess about the audience he or she is addressing. This imagined audience is the only one present when a message is actually being crafted, and it often guides the inventional process in important ways. The audience that hears, reads, or otherwise encounters a message may be quite similar to the imagined audience, but even highly trained writers or speakers guess wrongly at times. In demand as a speaker, Wayne Booth pointed out that even when he thought he knew his audience, he was sometimes mistaken:

> I always wrote with some kind of imaginary picture of listeners responding with smiles, scowls, or furrowed brows. Such prophecies often proved to be wildly awry: An imagined audience of thirty teachers who would have read the materials I sent them in advance turned out, in the reality faced a week or so later, to be ten teachers, along with two hundred captive freshmen reluctantly attending as part of their "reading" assignment; the audience for a "public lecture" was discovered to contain nobody from the public, only teachers.[19]

Booth's experience is not at all unusual. Nevertheless, some effort to estimate one's audience has always been, and remains, a crucial component in the rhetorical process.

Rhetorical discourse forges links between the rhetor's views and those of an audience. This means that speakers, writers, and designers must attend to an audience's values, experiences, beliefs, and aspirations. Twentieth-century rhetorical theorist Kenneth Burke (1897–1993) used the term *identification* to refer to the bond between rhetors and their audiences, finding identification crucial to cooperation, consensus,

compromise, and action. Two other rhetorical theorists have written that rhetoric involves "continuous adaptation of the speaker to [an] audience."[20]

Audiences and Attention

Our discussion of audience adaptation should not neglect the obvious concern that a speaker or writer has for keeping an audience's wandering attention. Richard Lanham has described rhetoric as "the economics of attention," that is, as a study concerned with managing the limited resource of audience attentiveness.[21] This interest in attention focuses *our* attention on a relatively new concern for students of rhetoric: Scientific studies of the brain are revealing some of the secrets of the audience and of persuasion.

Researchers at the University of Utah medical school took a major step toward understanding how we pay attention to various stimuli in our environment. Lead researcher Jeffery Anderson comments, "This study is the first of its kind to show how the brain switches attention from one feature to the next." Apparently, different parts of the brain process information from the different senses, and a "map" within the brain directs our attention to particular stimuli at any particular moment. "The research uncovers how we can shift our attention to different things with precision," says Anderson. "It's a big step in understanding how we organize information."[22] Rhetorical scholars will no doubt be interested in studying such attention maps. The issue of attention is now widely studied, with some research suggesting that our attention spans are getting shorter.[23]

Scientists are not the only ones studying attention. Brian Boyd, an expert on narrative, notes that "To hold an audience, in a world of competing demands on attention, an author needs to be an inventive intuitive psychologist."[24] Rhetorical theorists from ancient times to the present would agree—attracting and holding audience attention requires that the skillful rhetor become a student of the human mind, that is, of psychology. Attracting and holding audience attention is a central concern of the public advocate, and much of the art of rhetoric is directed to achieving this goal.

Rhetoric Reveals Human Motives

A third quality of rhetoric is closely related to the concern for the audience. Any study of rhetoric will reveal people acting symbolically in response to their motives, a term taking in commitments, goals, desires, or purposes that lead to action. Rhetors address audiences with goals in mind, and the planning and adaptation processes that mark rhetoric are governed by the desire to achieve these goals.

Motives that animate rhetorical discourse include making converts to a point of view, seeking cooperation to accomplish a task, building a consensus that enables group action, finding a compromise that breaks a stalemate, forging an agreement that makes peaceful coexistence possible, wishing to be understood, or simply having the last word on a subject. Rhetors accomplish such goals by aligning their own motives with an audience's commitments. For this reason, the history of rhetoric is replete with efforts to understand human values, to identify factors prompting audiences to action, and to grasp the symbolic resources for drawing people together.

Of course, there are good and bad motives. Imagine, for instance, a governor running for president. As you study the governor's public statements, you look for motives animating that rhetoric: Is the governor concerned with serving the public

good? Does she hope to see justice prevail? Is fame a motive, or greed? Perhaps all of these elements enter the governor's motivation. Of course, motives may be either admitted or concealed. The same politician would likely admit to desiring the public good but would be unlikely to admit to seeking fame, fortune, or even merely employment. Any informed critic of rhetoric must be aware that motives may be elusive or clearly evident, hidden, or openly admitted.

Rhetoric Is Responsive

The fourth quality of rhetorical discourse typically is a response either to a situation or to a previous rhetorical statement. By the same token, any statement, once advanced, is automatically an invitation for other would-be rhetors to respond. Rhetoric, then, is both "situated" and "dialogic." What does it mean for rhetoric to be situated? Simply that rhetoric is crafted in response to a set of circumstances, including a particular time, location, problem, and audience.

The situation prompting a rhetorical response may be a political controversy concerning welfare, a religious conflict over the role of women in a denomination, a debate in medical ethics over assisted suicide, the discussions about a policy that would control visitors in university dormitories, a natural disaster, or a theatrical performance in which a plea for racial harmony is advanced. Rhetoric is response-*making*.

But, rhetoric is also response-*inviting*. That is, any rhetorical expression may elicit a response from someone advocating an opposing view. Aware of this response-inviting nature of rhetoric, rhetors will imagine likely responses as they compose or "invent" their rhetorical appeals. They may find themselves coaxing their mental conception of a particular audience to respond the way they think the actual audience might. The response-*inviting* nature of rhetoric is easy to imagine when we are envisioning a setting such as a political campaign or a courtroom. But does rhetoric also invite response in less formal settings?

Think of a conversation between yourself and a friend regarding buying expensive tickets for a concert. You have given some thought to what you might say to persuade your friend to buy tickets for the concert, and you are even aware of the response your arguments will receive. Your first argument runs something like this: "Look, how often do you get to hear the Chicago Symphony live? And besides, it's only thirty bucks." You have argued from the rareness of the experience and the minimal costs involved. But your friend, ever the studied rhetor, is ready with a response: "Hey, thirty bucks is a lot of money, and I haven't paid my sister back the money she loaned me last week." Your friend has argued from the magnitude of the costs, and from a moral commitment to fulfilling prior obligations. Not to be denied your goal by such an eminently answerable argument, you respond: "But your sister has plenty of money, and thirty bucks is barely enough to buy dinner out."

And so it goes, each rhetorical statement invites a response. Maybe you persuade your friend, maybe you do not. But the rhetorical interaction will likely involve the exchange of statement and response so characteristic of rhetoric.

Rhetoric Seeks Persuasion

As we noted earlier in this chapter, the factor most often associated with rhetorical discourse has been its pursuit of persuasion. Though rhetoric often pursues other

goals, such as inquiry, beauty, or clear expression, it is important to recognize the centrality of persuasion throughout rhetoric's long history, perhaps especially in the Western world. Greek writers noted more than 2,500 years ago that rhetorical discourse sought persuasion, and a late twentieth-century rhetorical theorist can still be found stating straightforwardly that "the purpose of rhetoric is persuasion."[25] It may be helpful, however, to imagine a spectrum running from texts with relatively little persuasive intent (e.g., a news report on a link between stress and childhood obesity) to texts that are strictly persuasive in nature (e.g., a candidate's campaign speech).

Rhetorical discourse often seeks to influence an audience to accept an idea, and then to act. For example, an attorney argues before a jury that the accused is guilty of a crime. The attorney seeks the jurors' acceptance of the idea that the defendant is guilty, and the resulting action of finding the defendant guilty. Or, perhaps I try to persuade a friend that a candidate should be elected mayor on the basis of the candidate's plans to improve education in the city. I want my friend to accept the idea that this candidate is the best person for the job, and to take the action of voting for my candidate. Let us shift our focus to the arts. A play reveals through the symbols of the theater the vicious nature of racism. The play's author hopes both to influence the audience's thinking about racism and to affect the audience's actions on racial matters.

How does rhetorical discourse achieve persuasion? Speaking in the most general terms, rhetoric employs various resources of symbol systems such as language. Four such resources have long been recognized as assisting the goal of persuasion: arguments, appeals, arrangement, and aesthetics.

Argument

An argument is made when a conclusion is supported by reasons. An argument is simply private reasoning made public with the goal of influencing an audience. In fact, researchers Hugo Mercier and Dan Sperber have suggested that the entire purpose of our public reasoning—of making arguments—is to demonstrate to *others* that we have support for our views. This view has been labelled as The Argumentative Hypothesis. In other words, reasoning is not principally a matter of clarifying our own thinking but of creating a rhetorical presentation of our views for an audience. "We outline an approach to reasoning," they write, "based on the idea that the primary function for which it evolved is the production and evaluation of arguments in communication."[26]

Suppose that I wish to persuade a friend of the following claim: "The coach of the women's basketball team ought to be paid the same salary as the coach of the men's team." To support this claim, I then advance the following two reasons:

> First, the coach of the women's team is an associate professor, just as is the coach of the men's team. Second, the women's coach has the same responsibilities as the men's coach: to teach two courses each semester, and to prepare her team to play a full schedule of games.

I have now made an argument, and have sought to persuade my friend through a demonstration of my reasoning. Rhetoricians have long associated argument with the public practice of rhetoric, as will become clear from subsequent chapters.

Though we typically think of arguments as occurring in traditional texts such as speeches or editorials, they are not limited to such verbal documents. For example, music critic Tom Strini has written of conductor Andreas Delfs' "uncommon grasp of Beethoven's dramatic rhetoric" and even of the conductor's ability to discover "Beethoven's grand plan" in his Ninth Symphony. Perhaps more surprising, however, is Strini's comment that Delfs' conducting allowed his audience to "follow Beethoven's arguments" in this famous symphony. Specifically, Strini takes the Ninth Symphony to be the great composer's argument in favor of democracy.[27] Was Beethoven's symphony, then, a public argument for the correctness of his political views? From a rhetorical point of view, the answer to this question may be yes!

Appeals

Appeals are symbolic strategies that aim to elicit an emotion or engage the audience's value commitments. We are all familiar with emotional appeals such as those to pity, anger, or fear. You probably also have encountered appeals to authority, to patriotism, or to organizational loyalty.

Appeals can be difficult to distinguish from arguments, the difference often being simply one of degree. An argument is directed to reason, an appeal to something more visceral such as an emotion, a conviction, or feeling of which we may not be consciously aware. For instance, an advertisement shows a young woman standing in front of an expensive new car while cradling a baby in her arms. The caption reads: "How much is your family's safety worth?" Though an argument is implied in the picture and caption, the advertisement is structured as an appeal to one's sense of responsibility. Even if reason responded, "Yes, safety is worth a great deal, but I still can't afford that car," the advertisement's appeal could perhaps still achieve its intended effect.

Arrangement

Arrangement refers to the planned ordering of a message to achieve the effect of persuasion, clarity, or beauty. A speaker makes the decision to place the strongest of his or her three arguments against animal experimentation last in a speech to a local civic organization. He or she believes that his or her strongest argument stands to have the greatest impact on his or her audience if it is the last point they hear.

Speakers and writers make many such decisions about arrangement in their messages, but the designers of a public building often make similar decisions. The Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., for instance, is physically arranged to make the strongest case possible against the racial hatred that resulted in the horrors of the concentration camps, and against all similar attitudes and actions. Careful planning went into decisions about which scenes visitors would encounter as they entered the museum, as they progressed through it, and as they exited. The great impact of this museum is enhanced by its careful arrangement, a concern the famous rhetorician Cicero referred to as *dispositio*.

Aesthetics

Aesthetics are elements adding form, beauty, and force to symbolic expression. Writers, speakers, composers, or other sources typically wish to present arguments and appeals in a manner that is attractive, memorable, or perhaps even shocking to the intended audience.

Abraham Lincoln's "Second Inaugural Address" is a striking example of language's aesthetic resources employed to memorable and moving effect. Consider the use of metaphor, allusion, consonance, rhythm, and rhyme in the following lines:

> Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, that the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.[28]

Lincoln drew upon the aesthetic resources of language in a traditional way to make his speech more aesthetically appealing and thus more moving and memorable. In some cases, however, a source may decide intentionally to offend traditional aesthetic expectations to achieve greater persuasive impact. In the following passage, for example, Malcolm X answers some of the arguments of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. with provocative language that violates traditional conventions:

> This is a real revolution. Revolution is always based on land. Revolution is never based on begging somebody for an integrated cup of coffee. Revolutions are never based on love-your-enemy and pray-for-those-who-spitefully-use-you. And revolutions are never waged singing "We Shall Overcome." Revolutions are based on bloodshed.[29]

Malcolm X, like Abraham Lincoln, employs allusion, consonance, repetition, and other aesthetic devices to enhance his discourse and to make it more vivid, moving, and memorable. Though Malcolm X employs the aesthetic resources of language, it would not be quite accurate to say that his goal has been to make his speech more beautiful or pleasant to listen to. Rather, his goal is to shock his audience out of complacency, and to get them to reject one suggested course of action and to accept a different one.

The aesthetic dimension of rhetoric has always been important to the art. In the next chapter, we will see that one of the early Sophists, Gorgias, believed that the sounds of words, when manipulated with skill, could captivate audiences. The persuasive potential in the aesthetic resources of language is a persistent theme in rhetorical history.

Arguments, appeals, arrangement, and aesthetics each remind us that rhetoric is not only persuasive but also carefully planned discourse. Over its history, the art of rhetoric has developed around the realization that various resources available in symbol systems allow skilled practitioners to achieve various desired effects, including persuasion, clarity, beauty of expression, and capturing an audience's attention.

Rhetoric Addresses Contingent Issues

In an attempt to define the study of rhetoric, the Greek philosopher Aristotle (384–322 BCE) wrote that "it is the duty of rhetoric to deal with such matters as we deliberate upon without arts or systems to guide us" and when "the subjects of our deliberation are such as seem to present us with alternative possibilities." He added,

"About things that could not have been, and cannot be, other than they are, nobody who takes them to be of this nature wastes his time in delineation."[30]

Aristotle apparently thought that rhetoric comes into play when we are faced with practical questions about matters that confront everyone, and about which there are no definite and unavoidable answers. Such contingent questions require deliberation or the weighing of options, not proof of the type mathematicians might use. Rhetoric assists that process of weighing options when the issues facing us are contingent.

To deliberate is to reason through alternatives, and Aristotle says no one does this when things cannot be "other than they are." Rhetorical theorist Thomas Farrell (1947–2006) put the point this way: "It makes no sense to deliberate over things which are going to be the case anyway or things which could never be the case."[31] So, the art of rhetoric would not address a question such as whether the sun will rise tomorrow morning, nor one such as whether France should be made the fifty-first American state. The one is an inevitable fact (it is "going to be the case anyway"), the other a virtual impossibility (it "could never be the case").

Rhetorical theorist Lloyd Bitzer (1931–2016), quoting the nineteenth-century writer Thomas De Quincey (1785–1859), has this to say about contingency: "Rhetoric deals mainly with matters which lie in that vast field 'where there is no *pro* and *con*, with the chance of right and wrong, true and false, distributed in varying proportions among them.'" Bitzer adds, "[R]hetoric applies to contingent and probable matters which are subjects of actual or possible disagreement by serious people, and which permit alternative beliefs, values, and positions."[32]

Rhetoric addresses unresolved issues that do not dictate a particular outcome, and in the process it engages our value commitments. Thus, according to Farrell, Aristotle treated "the very best audiences as a kind of extension of self, capable of weighing the merits of practical alternatives."[33] As individuals, we face many of the same kinds of issues, practical and moral questions that demand decisions or judgments. Of course, similar questions face us as members of the larger public. Is a just war possible? What subjects should be taught in our schools? How can health care be equitably distributed? When there are alternatives to be weighed and matters are neither inevitable nor impossible, we are facing contingent issues that invite the use of rhetoric.

We can shift our focus just a bit at this point and consider the practical results achieved by the art of rhetoric in democratic societies. We will see that when the art of rhetoric is taken seriously, studied carefully, and practiced well, it performs various vital social functions.

SOCIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE ART OF RHETORIC

We began this chapter by noting some unpleasant associations the art of rhetoric has carried with it through its history. But, though rhetoric can be used for wrong ends such as deception, it also plays many important social roles. Rhetoric's misuse is more likely when the art is available only to an elite, when it is poorly understood by audiences, or when it is unethically practiced. The six functions of rhetoric I will highlight are the following: (1) ideas are tested, (2) advocacy is assisted, (3) power is distributed, (4) facts are discovered, (5) knowledge is shaped, and (6) communities are built.

Rhetoric Tests Ideas

One of rhetoric's most important functions is that it allows ideas to be tested on their merits. The practice of rhetoric can provide a peaceful means for evaluating ideas publicly. To win acceptance for a concept I have to advocate it, and effective advocacy means thinking and acting rhetorically. That is to say, advocacy calls on one's knowledge of rhetoric. Testing ideas begins as I come up with my arguments (invention) and shape them into a structured message (arrangement), and it continues as an audience responds to my presentation.

The audience is a vital element in rhetoric's capacity to test ideas. In seeking an audience's consent, we recognize that the audience members will exercise critical judgment. Some audiences test ideas carefully while others are careless about this responsibility. The better equipped an audience is to test ideas advanced for their consideration, and the more care that goes into that testing, the greater assurance we have of the quality of ideas. This testing of ideas in public settings constitutes a distinct benefit to society. Thus, training in the art of rhetoric is just as important for audience members as it is for advocates.

The responses of both friendly critics and opponents help me strengthen my arguments and refine my ideas. Adapting to critical responses makes my case clearer, stronger, more moving, and more persuasive. The process of testing and refining ideas is tied directly to understanding and practicing the art of rhetoric.

What goes in to testing ideas rhetorically? To critically examine an idea means answering questions such as the following:

—Do I trust the rhetor advocating the idea?
—Is the idea clear or obscure?
—Are the arguments supporting the idea convincing?
—Is the evidence advanced in the idea's support recent and from reliable sources?
—Have unnecessary appeals been employed to distract attention from faulty arguments?
—Are contradictions present in the advocate's case?

Just as advocates rely on rhetorical resources, each of these questions also finds its answer in some dimension of the art of rhetoric. This means that audiences must also be rhetorically astute if the idea-testing function of the art of rhetoric is to be robust and trustworthy.

Rhetoric Assists Advocacy

Rhetoric is the method by which we advocate ideas we believe in. Rhetoric gives our private ideas a public voice, thus directing attention to them. Recall that Richard Lanham defines rhetoric as the study of "how attention is created and allocated."[34] For this reason, he speaks of rhetoric as teaching "the economics of attention."[35]

Politics comes to mind as an activity requiring advocacy; political speeches, debates, and campaign ads promote ideas and candidates. Rhetoric is employed in preparing such messages. The same is true when lobbyists make their case to legislators, when constituents write letters to their representatives, and when committees debate the merits of a proposal. Similarly, in the arena of law, the art of rhetoric

helps attorneys prepare their clients' cases. Courtroom pleading itself has involved rhetorical skill since courts first appeared in the ancient world, and advocates in newer legal arenas such as environmental law also turn to rhetoric.

Advocacy in less structured settings often follows the principles taught by the art as well, whether or not advocates have had the benefit of formal education in rhetoric. For instance, when you express an artistic judgment to a friend—say, that Spike Lee's films are better than those of Steven Spielberg—you advance your reasons guided by some sense—trained or intuitive—of how to present ideas effectively.

The same holds true for a media project prepared for a course on documentary production. In a 20-minute video presenting interviews with breast cancer patients, a student builds a case for increased funding for research. The video will be shown not only to her class but also to funding agencies. Editorial decisions are made guided by principles such as the following: Which portions of the interviews will be used? Which interviews will come first and last? Will the interviewer herself play a prominent role in the video or will she remain in the background? Such judgments are made with some sense of how an effective case is constructed in the medium of video, within a limited amount of time, and before particular audiences.

Whether in formal contexts such as a courtroom or a less structured setting such as a conversation, the art of rhetoric is crucial to effective advocacy. Rhetoric is the study of effective advocacy; it provides a voice for ideas, thus drawing attention to them. This important function of rhetoric may easily be overlooked, but any time an idea moves from private belief to public statement the art of rhetoric is employed.

Understanding the art of rhetoric enhances one's skill in advocacy. We may at times wish that some persons or groups did *not* understand rhetoric, because we disagree with their aims or find their ideas repugnant. The solution to this problem would appear to be an improved understanding of rhetoric on our part. When we disagree with a point of view, rhetoric helps us to prepare an answer, to advance a counterargument. This brings us to the third benefit of the art of rhetoric, its capacity to distribute power.

Rhetoric Distributes Power

Our discussion of rhetoric's role in advocacy raises the closely related issue of rhetoric and power. Due to its capacity for influencing decisions, rhetoric is a form of social power. When we think of rhetoric and power, certain questions come to mind:

—Who is allowed to speak in a society?
—On what topics are we permitted to speak?
—In which settings is speech allowed?
—What kind of language is it permissible to employ?
—Which media are available to which advocates, and why?

Talk Is Action

The answers these questions receive have a lot to do with the distribution of power or influence. Issues of power and its distribution have always been central to rhetorical theory. James Berlin writes, "Those who construct rhetorics … are first and foremost concerned with addressing the play of power in their own day."[36] Berlin is asserting,

then, that even the guidelines one sets out as normative for writing and speaking are influenced by, perhaps developed in the service of, existing power structures.

When we contrast talk to action in statements like, "Let's stop talking and *do* something," we may be misleading ourselves regarding language's great power to shape our thinking and thus our actions. Rhetorical theorists have long recognized that language and power are intimately connected, and that power involves more than physical force or monetary resources. Speaking and writing are forms of action, and thus rhetoric might be understood as the study of how symbols are used effectively as a source of power. We can identify three types of power with which rhetoric is closely associated.

Personal Power

First, rhetoric contributes to *personal* power. The art provides an avenue to success and advancement by sharpening our expressive skills. Seminars in effective speaking, writing, and even in vocabulary building suggest that the relationship between personal success and language is widely acknowledged. Human resources specialist Rebecca R. Hastings has written, "To be successful, young workers need to develop a lot more than job-specific knowledge, experts say. Of the so-called soft skills needed for success in the workplace, communication skills are particularly critical."[37] Clear, effective, and persuasive expression is not simply a matter of demonstrating your sophistication; it is an important means of advancing toward the goals you have set for yourself.

Psychological Power

Second, rhetoric is a source of *psychological* power, that is, the power to shape thought. Symbols and thoughts are intricately connected; we may change the way people think simply by altering their symbolic framework through a skillfully crafted message. In addition to its capacity to affect action, rhetoric is a means by which one person alters the psychological world of another. Indeed, symbols are perhaps our only avenue into the mental world.

Advertising provides an example of rhetoric's psychological power. Through the strategic use of symbols, advertisers seek to shape our psychological frame and thus our behavior. The repeated symbolic association in advertising between a very thin body and personal attractiveness has led many individuals to become dissatisfied with their appearance. This alteration in one's psychological world can have harmful consequences when it begins to affect a behavior such as eating. For this reason, rhetoric's power to alter the mental world of an audience must be approached with great care.

Political Power

Third, rhetoric is a source of *political* power. The distribution of political influence is often a matter of who gets to speak, where they are allowed to speak, and on what subjects. As we shall see in Chapter 11, French philosopher Michel Foucault explored this intersection of rhetoric and political power in a society. He suggested that power is not a fixed, hierarchical social arrangement, but rather a fluid concept closely connected to the symbolic strategies that hold sway at any particular time. In other words, political power is, for Foucault, directly related to the practice of rhetoric.

Some groups have a greater opportunity to be heard than do others, a fact that raises a concern for the "privileging" of some perspectives or ideologies. An ideology is a system of belief, or a framework for interpreting the world.[38] An unexamined

ideology may prevent its adherents from seeing things "as they are." Thus, we need to be wary of rhetoric's use to concentrate as well as to distribute power.[39] When rhetoric is employed to advocate ideas, but its capacity to test ideas is subverted, the reign of unexamined ideology becomes a real possibility.

Rhetoric Discovers Facts

Rhetoric tests ideas, assists advocacy, and distributes power. A fourth important function of rhetoric is that it helps us to discover facts and truths crucial to decision-making. Rhetoric assists this important task in at least three ways.

First, in order to prepare a case, you must locate evidence to support your ideas. This investigative process is an integral part of the art of rhetoric. Though we may have strong convictions, if we are to convince an audience to agree with us, these convictions have to be supported with evidence and arguments. Solid evidence allows better decisions on contingent matters. Second, crafting a message involves evaluating the available facts. This process of invention often suggests new ways of understanding facts and new relationships among facts. Third, the clash of arguments brings new facts to light and refines available ones.

Audiences expect advocates to be well informed. As an advocate you become a source of information crucial to decision-making. But your audience, which may include opponents, will also be evaluating the evidence you present. Some facts may be misleading, outdated, irrelevant, or not convincing. Thus, the art of rhetoric assists not just the discovery of new facts, but also an interactive process of determining which facts are actually relevant and convincing. Of course, rhetoric might also be employed to conceal facts, which reminds us again that rhetoric always raises ethical concerns. As we shall see in Chapter 2, the realization that rhetoric assists the discovery of facts is an ancient one, as is awareness that it might also obscure facts.

Rhetoric Shapes Knowledge

How do we come to agreements about what we know or value? How does a particular view of justice come to prevail in one community or culture? How does a value for equality under the law become established? How do we know that equality is better than inequality? Though the answer to any one of these questions is complex, an important connection exists between knowledge and rhetorical practices.

Rhetoric often plays a critical social role in determining what we accept as true, right, or probable. For this reason, rhetoric scholar Robert Scott (1928–2018) referred to rhetoric as "epistemic," that is, knowledge-building.[40] What did he mean? Through rhetorical interaction, we come to accept some ideas as true and to reject others as false. Rhetoric's knowledge-building function derives from its tendency to test ideas. Once an idea has been thoroughly tested by a community, it becomes part of what is accepted as known. Of course, this acceptance as knowledge may be temporary; further rhetorical interactions may call into question what is currently accepted as known.

How Do We "Know"?

That knowledge develops rhetorically runs counter to our usual understanding of the sources of knowledge. We often think that knowledge comes through our direct experience, or through the indirect experience that we call education. Knowledge is

treated as an object to be discovered in the same way as an astronomer discovers a new star: The star was always out there, and the astronomer just happened to see it. Some knowledge fits this objective description better than other knowledge does.

Perhaps rhetoric plays a limited role in establishing this sort of knowledge. But, the star's *age* is less certain than is its existence, and may require argument among scientists to ascertain. Rhetoric now begins to play a role in establishing knowledge, for the scientists involved in the debate will likely draw on what they know of the art to persuade their peers. They will assess their audience, craft arguments they think will be persuasive, avoid ones that are less persuasive, arrange their arguments in an effective order, and provide evidence to support their claims. And that is not the end of the process—even if the majority of scientists *do* reach agreement, these same scientists may find themselves adapting their arguments to a new audience of non-specialists, taking into consideration a new set of audience demands. The question of what we say we know will still be important. Knowledge about the universe's age has religious significance for many people. Do we know that the star's age should be taught in schools? Do we know that money should be invested in trying to launch a telescope to get a better look at the new star? Rhetorical interactions are involved in resolving these questions as well, and the way rhetoric is practiced is important in determining what finally is accepted as knowledge.

Rhetoric Builds Community

What defines a community? One answer to this question is that what people value, know, or believe in common defines a community. Some observers fear that Americans may be losing their sense of constituting a community in the face of growing pressures toward fragmentation. If this is the case, and if preserving a sense of community is a goal worth striving for, what can be done about this problem of social fragmentation?

Many of the processes by which we come to hold beliefs and values in common are rhetorical in nature. Michael J. Hogan, a scholar who has studied the relationship between rhetoric and community, writes that "rhetoric shapes the character and health of communities in countless ways … ." Many writers who have sought to understand the ways in which communities form have concluded that "communities are largely defined, and rendered healthy or dysfunctional, by the language they use to characterize themselves and others."[41] If this is indeed the case, as Hogan and others have suggested, then it is important to explore the specific function played by rhetoric in building—or perhaps in undermining—communities.

Communities are not simply geographical entities bounded by borders or contained in particular districts of a city. Communities are made up of people who find common cause with one another, who see the world in a similar way, who have similar concerns and aspirations. Thus, a religious organization, a group of employees, and members of an ethnic group living in the same city might constitute communities. Not every aspect of such communities results from the practice of rhetoric. For example, ethnicity is not a function of discourse. But developing common values, common aspirations, and common beliefs very often is a result of what is said, by whom, and with what effect.

Consider, for example, the community that developed around the civil rights advocacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in the 1950s and 1960s. Dr. King was a highly

skillful and knowledgeable practitioner of the art of rhetoric. He, and others working with him, created a community of value and action, and much of their work was accomplished by means of effective rhetorical discourse. More specifically, Dr. King advocated certain values in a persuasive manner. Among these were equality, justice, non-violence, and peace. He also tested particular ideas in public settings—ideas like racism, which he rejected, and ideas like unity among races, which he embraced. He brought facts to light for his audiences, such as facts about the treatment of African American people.

Dr. King provided a language for talking about racial harmony. His dream of a racially unified America and his advocacy of "nonviolent resistance" inspired many in the civil rights movement who made his terminology part of their own vocabulary. Through his rhetorical efforts, King built a community of discourse that enabled people to think and act with unity. He developed an active and effective community around powerful ideas to which he gave voice rhetorically.

Often members of a community—examples might include feminists, Orthodox Jews, or animal rights activists—do not know all of the other members of their community personally. In fact, any particular member of a large and diffuse community might know only a very small fraction of the people who would say they belong to the group. How is a sense of community maintained when a community is large and geographically diffuse? Certainly, the group's symbols, metaphors, and ways of reasoning function to create a common bond that promotes a strong sense of community despite physical separation. Moreover, communities are sustained over time by the rhetorical interactions of their members with one another and with members of other groups. As Hogan writes, "[C]ommunities are living creatures, nurtured and nourished by rhetorical discourse."[42]

This section has discussed six functions performed by the practice of rhetoric: (1) testing ideas, (2) assisting advocacy, (3) distributing power, (4) discovering facts, (5) shaping knowledge, and (6) building community. These functions are closely related to major themes in the history of rhetoric and provide connections among subsequent chapters. The next section sets out some of these themes in greater detail.

CONCLUSION

We began this chapter by considering some common meanings of the term *rhetoric*, such as empty talk, beautiful language, or persuasion. Whereas these meanings frequently are associated with the term, rhetoric was defined as the study or practice of effective symbolic expression, we noted that rhetoric refers to a type of discourse marked by several characteristics that include being planned, adapted to an audience, and responsive to a set of circumstances. We have also considered some of rhetoric's social functions such as testing ideas, assisting advocacy, and building communities.

Recurrent Themes

Several important issues arise when we begin to think seriously about the art of rhetoric and its various uses. We will return to these themes as we consider the ways in

which the art of rhetoric has developed over the past 2,500 years. The following issues will be revisited throughout this text:

Rhetoric and Power

As we have seen, rhetoric bears an important relationship to power in a society. The art of rhetoric itself brings a measure of power, and rhetorical practices play an important role in both distributing and concentrating power. Every culture makes decisions about who may speak, before which audiences, and on which topics. Altering these limitations will often mean violating such established norms, whether through the practice of rhetoric, rhetorical education, or both. If a segment of a society lacks the knowledge of rhetoric, or is denied the ability to practice rhetoric, does this mean that their access to power is correspondingly diminished? We will examine this question at several junctures in the history of rhetoric.

Rhetoric and Truth

Rhetoric discovers facts relevant to decision-making. Moreover, rhetoric helps to shape what we say we know or believe. What, then, is rhetoric's relationship to truth? Does rhetoric discover truth? Or, does rhetoric simply provide one the means of communicating truth discovered by other approaches, for instance, the scientific method? As we explore the history of rhetoric, we will uncover various answers to these questions. If truth is transcendent, rhetoric's role in its discovery or creation may be minimal. In fact, rhetoric might even be a threat to truth. If, on the other hand, truth is a matter of social agreements, rhetoric plays a major role in establishing what is true.

Rhetoric and Ethics

Persuasion is central to rhetoric. This means that rhetoric always raises moral or ethical questions. If persuasion is always wrong, then rhetoric shares this moral condemnation. If persuasion is acceptable, it is important to ask about ethical obligations of a speaker, writer, or artist. What are the moral restraints within which rhetoric ought to be practiced? Few people would want to live in a society in which rhetoric is practiced without any regard for ethical responsibility on the part of advocates.

Rhetoric and the Audience

The question of ethics is inseparable from the question of a rhetor's potential influence on an audience because rhetoric is a form of power, and ethical considerations attend rhetoric. How does rhetoric alter an audience's ways of thinking or prompt action on their part? Moreover, if audiences have some control over the quality of rhetoric, are we morally obliged to educate audiences about rhetoric? As we explore the history of rhetoric, the audience will often be a central concern.

Rhetoric and Society

Our discussion in this chapter has also raised the larger issue of rhetoric's role in developing and maintaining communities and societies. We have considered rhetoric's specific social functions. We depend on rhetoric to forge the compromises and achieve the cooperation needed to live and work together. Such functions are crucial to flourishing democracies. As we survey the history of rhetoric we will want to pay attention to the ways in which rhetoric shapes the values that provide societies

a corporate identity and a common direction. How is it that the skillful practice of rhetoric benefits a society, not just practically but morally as well?

These themes and questions will attend our discussion of rhetoric's history. The different answers to our questions suggested by a wide range of writers, and the reasons for their answers, make the history of rhetoric a rich and intriguing source of insight into the development of human thought, relationships, and culture. In Chapter 2, we will encounter most of these themes as we begin our study of rhetoric's long and rich history by looking at its controversial origins and early development in ancient Greece.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. How are the following terms defined in the chapter?

    • rhetoric
    • the art of rhetoric
    • rhetorical discourse
    • rhetor
    • symbol
    • rhetorical theory
    • the Argumentative Hypothesis

2. What are the marks or characteristics of rhetorical *discourse* discussed in this chapter?
3. Which specific resources of language are discussed under the heading "Rhetoric Is Planned"?
4. What *social functions* of the art of rhetoric are discussed in this chapter?
5. Which three types of power are enhanced by an understanding of the art of rhetoric?
6. What is meant by the statement that rhetoric addresses contingent issues?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. The following artifacts, Abraham Lincoln's "Second Inaugural Address" and Emily Dickinson's poem "Success Is Counted Sweetest," were written at about the same time, and each is written with reference to the Civil War. The two pieces are often held to represent two different types of discourse: Lincoln's address is categorized as rhetoric, while Dickinson's work fits best into the category of poetry. Thinking back on the characteristics of rhetorical discourse discussed in this chapter, what case could be made, if any, for distinguishing Lincoln's work from Dickinson's? Do they belong to different literary categories? Refer back to the resources of language—argument, appeal, arrangement, and artistic devices—in thinking about these two pieces. Does each employ all four resources?

"Second Inaugural Address"

Abraham Lincoln

Fellow-countrymen: At this second appearing to take the oath of the presidential office, there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at first. Then a statement, somewhat in detail, of a course to be pursued seemed very fitting and proper. Now, at the expiration of 4 years, during which public declarations have been constantly called forth on every point and phase of the great contest which still absorbs the attention and engrosses the energies of the nation, little that is new could be presented.

The progress of our arms, upon which all else chiefly depends, is as well known to the public as to myself, and it is, I trust, reasonably satisfactory and encouraging to all. With high hope for the future, no prediction in regard to it is ventured.

On the occasion corresponding to 4 years ago, all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil war. All dreaded it, all sought to avoid it. While the inaugural address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to saving the Union without war, insurgent agents were in the city seeking to destroy it with war seeking to dissolve the Union and divide the effects by negotiation. Both parties deprecated war, but one of them would make war rather than let it perish, and the war came. One-eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the Southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was somehow the cause of the war. To strengthen, perpetuate, and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union by war, while the government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement of it.

Neither party expected for the war nor the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease when, or even before the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces, but let us judge not that we be not judged. The prayer of both could not be answered. That of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes. Woe unto the world because of offenses, for it must needs be that offenses come, but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh. If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offence came, shall we discern there any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two 250 years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said 3,000 years ago, so still it must be said, that the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his

orphans, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and a lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.[43]

"Success Is Counted Sweetest"
Emily Dickinson

Success is counted sweetest
By those who ne'er succeed.
To comprehend a nectar
Requires sorest need.
Not one of all the purple host
Who took the flag to-day
Can tell the definition,
So clear, of victory,
As he, defeated, dying,
On whose forbidden ear
The distant strains of triumph Break, agonized, and clear.[44]

2. If rhetoric accomplishes the benefits and performs the functions discussed in this chapter, it might follow that rhetorical training should be a central component in education. Has training in rhetoric or some related discipline been part of your educational experience? Should education focus more on the skills that make up the art of rhetoric?
3. Is rhetoric pervasive in private and social life, as the chapter suggests? In what realms of life, if any, does rhetoric appear to have little or no part to play? Where is its influence greatest, in your estimation? Where is it present, but hidden?
4. Steven Mailloux has written that there are "oral, visual, written, digital, gestural" rhetorics. Which other types of rhetoric would you add to this list? What special types or genres would you include under the types you have added?
5. Respond to the claim that rhetoric is important to the process of building community. Has it been your experience, when people come together to form a community, that ways of speaking and reasoning in common are an important part of that process? Could a greater understanding of the art of rhetoric enhance this process of building a community?
6. Some people have criticized rhetoric for being manipulative. Do you believe that rhetoric is, by its very nature, manipulative? If not, what ethical guidelines might be important for constraining the practice of rhetoric so that it does not become a tool for manipulation?
7. The following speech was delivered by Civil Rights activist Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer on August 22, 1964 to the Credentials Committee of the Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Though she lacked formal rhetorical training, the speech stands as a powerful example of morally informed oratory. Drawing on this chapter's discussion of the social functions of argument, write a one-page analysis of how Mrs. Hamer's testimony before the committee illustrates any two of those functions.

Mr. Chairman, and to the Credentials Committee, my name is Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer, and I live at 626 East Lafayette Street, Ruleville, Mississippi, Sunflower County, the home of Senator James O. Eastland and Senator Stennis.

It was the 31st of August in 1962 that eighteen of us traveled twenty-six miles to the county courthouse in Indianola to try to register to become first-class citizens. We was met in Indianola by policemen, Highway Patrolmen, and they only allowed two of us in to take the literacy test at the time. After we had taken this test and started back to Ruleville, we was held up by the City Police and the State Highway Patrolmen and carried back to Indianola where the bus driver was charged that day with driving a bus the wrong color.

After we paid the fine among us, we continued on to Ruleville, and Reverend Jeff Sunny carried me four miles in the rural area where I had worked as a timekeeper and sharecropper for eighteen years. I was met there by my children, who told me the plantation owner was angry because I had gone down—tried to register.

After they told me, my husband came, and said the plantation owner was raising Cain because I had tried to register. And before he quit talking the plantation owner came and said, "Fannie Lou, do you know—did Pap tell you what I said?"

And I said, "Yes, sir." He said, "Well I mean that." Said, "If you don't go down and withdraw your registration, you will have to leave." Said, "Then if you go down and withdraw," said, "you still might have to go because we're not ready for that in Mississippi." And I addressed him and told him and said, "I didn't try to register for you. I tried to register for myself."

I had to leave that same night. On the 10th of September 1962, sixteen bullets were fired into the home of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Tucker for me. That same night two girls were shot in Ruleville, Mississippi. Also, Mr. Joe McDonald's house was shot in.

And June the 9th, 1963, I had attended a voter registration workshop; was returning back to Mississippi. Ten of us was traveling by the Continental Trailway bus. When we got to Winona, Mississippi, which is Montgomery County, four of the people got off to use the washroom, and two of the people—to use the restaurant—two of the people wanted to use the washroom.

The four people that had gone in to use the restaurant was ordered out. During this time I was on the bus. But when I looked through the window and saw they had rushed out I got off of the bus to see what had happened. And one of the ladies said, "It was a State Highway Patrolman and a Chief of Police ordered us out." I got back on the bus and one of the persons had used the washroom got back on the bus, too.

As soon as I was seated on the bus, I saw when they began to get the five people in a highway patrolman's car. I stepped off of the bus to see what was happening and somebody screamed from the car that the five workers was in and said, "Get that one there." And when I went to get in the car, when the man told me I was under arrest, he kicked me.

I was carried to the county jail and put in the booking room. They left some of the people in the booking room and began to place us in cells. I was placed in a cell with a young woman called Miss Ivesta Simpson. After I was placed in the cell I began to hear sounds of licks and screams. I could hear the sounds of licks and horrible screams. And I could hear somebody say, "Can you say, 'yes, sir,' nigger? Can you say 'yes, sir'?"

And they would say other horrible names. She would say, "Yes, I can say 'yes, sir.'" "So, well, say it." She said, "I don't know you well enough." They beat her,

I don't know how long. And after a while she began to pray, and asked God to have mercy on those people.

And it wasn't too long before three white men came to my cell. One of these men was a State Highway Patrolman and he asked me where I was from. And I told him Ruleville. He said, "We are going to check this." And they left my cell and it wasn't too long before they came back. He said, "You are from Ruleville all right," and he used a curse word. And he said, "We're going to make you wish you was dead."

I was carried out of that cell into another cell where they had two Negro prisoners. The State Highway Patrolmen ordered the first Negro to take the blackjack. The first Negro prisoner ordered me, by orders from the State Highway Patrolman, for me to lay down on a bunk bed on my face. And I laid on my face, the first Negro began to beat me.

And I was beat by the first Negro until he was exhausted. I was holding my hands behind me at that time on my left side, because I suffered from polio when I was six years old. After the first Negro had beat until he was exhausted, the State Highway Patrolman ordered the second Negro to take the blackjack.

The second Negro began to beat and I began to work my feet, and the State Highway Patrolman ordered the first Negro who had beat to sit on my feet—to keep me from working my feet. I began to scream and one white man got up and began to beat me in my head and tell me to hush.

One white man—my dress had worked up high—he walked over and pulled my dress—I pulled my dress down and he pulled my dress back up. I was in jail when Medgar Evers was murdered.

All of this is on account of we want to register, to become first-class citizens. And if the Freedom Democratic Party is not seated now, I question America. Is this America, the land of the free and the home of the brave, where we have to sleep with our telephones off of the hooks because our lives be threatened daily, because we want to live as decent human beings, in America?

Thank you.[45]

TERMS

Aesthetics Study of the persuasive potential in the form, beauty, or force of symbolic expression.

Appeals Symbolic methods that aim either to elicit an emotion or to engage the audience's loyalties or commitments.

Argument Discourse characterized by reasons advanced to support a conclusion. Reasoning made public with the goal of influencing an audience.

Argumentative Hypothesis The view that the entire purpose of our public reasoning—of making arguments—is to demonstrate to *others* that we have support for our views.

Arrangement The planned ordering of a message to achieve the greatest persuasive effect.

Dispositio Arrangement; Cicero's term for the effective ordering of arguments and appeals.

Elocutio Style; Cicero's term to designate the concern for finding the appropriate language or style for a message.

Ideology A system of belief, or a framework for interpreting the world.

Inventio Invention; Cicero's term describing the process of coming up with the arguments and appeals that would make up the substance of a persuasive case.

Motives Commitments, goals, desires, or purposes when they lead to action.

Rhetor Anyone engaged in preparing or presenting rhetorical discourse.

Rhetoric, Art of The study and practice of effective symbolic expression.

Rhetoric, Type of discourse Goal-oriented discourse that seeks, by means of the resources of symbols, to adapt ideas to an audience.

Rhetorical discourse Language crafted according to the principles of the art of rhetoric.

Rhetorical theory The systematic presentation of rhetoric's principles, descriptions of its various functions, and explanations of how rhetoric achieves its goals.

Symbol Any mark, sign, sound, or gesture that represents something based on social agreement.

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45 Used with permission of the Fannie Lou Hamer Memorial Garden and Museum Foundation, Charles McLaurin, President of the Board.

Notes

CHAPTER 1

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CHAPTER 2

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[T]he individual is wise in the same way, and in the same part of himself, as the city … And the part which makes the individual brave is the same as that which makes the city brave, and in the same manner, and everything which makes for virtue is the same in both … The city was just because each of the three classes in it was fulfilling its own task. Jon Moline, *Plato's Theory of Understanding* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1981), 55.

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